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A RIDE THROUGH
—
CAPT. PEEL, R.N.
—
THE NUBIAN DESERT.



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A R I D E
THROUGH
THE NUBIAN DESERT.

LONDON:
SPOTTISWOODES and SHAW,
New-street-Square.

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A RIDE
THROUGH
THE NUBIAN DESERT.

BY
CAPTAIN W. PEEL, R.N.



LONDON:
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PREFACE.

THESE few pages are a literal copy of the journal that I kept in travelling. The limit of those travels was Labeyed, the capital of Kordofan, where I suffered so severely from fever and ague that it obliged me to return. I arrived there soon after the close of the rainy season, in the pride of health, and confident of success ; but three weeks after, left, a pale and sickly shadow, with all my thoughts brought down as to how I should save my friend, who was suffering still more severely than myself.

I mention this that the reader may not

be disappointed at the abrupt termination of my travels. I had intended to continue them a much longer period, but I am sure he will respect my misfortune in having been prevented from doing so by sickness.

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A R I D E
THROUGH
THE NUBIAN DESERT.

CHAPTER I.

EGYPT.

LONDON:
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A RIDE THROUGH THE NUBIAN DESERT.

CHAPTER I.

EGYPT.

I LEFT England on the 20th of August 1851, accompanied by Mr. Joseph Churi, on board the Pottinger for Alexandria. Although a slow boat, being favoured by a smooth sea and fair breezes, we made a rapid passage, and, including a stoppage of six hours at Gibraltar and some forty at Malta, arrived at Alexandria on the morning of the 4th of September. The same forenoon we were all embarked in the canal boat on the Mahmoudieh and towed to

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till Cape St. Vincent awoke me to other feelings, — reminded me of the enthusiasm of my boyhood. Now all home-sick, love-sick yearnings vanished, and again I trod the deck with a high hope ; my heart was lifted with England's honour. Then came Trafalgar.* Would that Nelson had known the meaning of that name ! it would have fixed a smile upon his dying lips. Next morning we were at Gibraltar. It was whilst looking at that noble fortress, true symbol of England's power, that I heard a beautiful English lady exclaim how she could fight to defend it. We had a most pleasant stay at Malta, whilst waiting the arrival of the Marseilles mail ; it was the last link to Europe, the last parting with civilisation for our India passengers. They left me at Cairo, thinking I was bound for pleasure, all except one, to whose kind and honoured friendship I had confided my views. I watched them all depart ; to me it was another trial ; I felt tired of Egypt, and turned with horror from the natives, for whom I had

* Trafalgar is an Arabic word which means "The Cape of Laurels," from طرفالغر

in sympathy in despair from the rapid flowing Nile, whose current may be stemmed so many hundred miles: I was in most wretched health, and the question rose why should I go. Europe seemed so inviting, her civilisation so intelligent, her Christianity so genial. But four days sufficed to restore my health, and in the quiet rides to Shoubra, unsurpassed by those of any city, along the banks of the mysterious Nile, all my high hopes returned. Through the kindness of our Consul-General Mr. Murray, a Firman and a Couwass were immediately obtained, and at sunset of the 11th of September we sailed from Boulac, the port of Cairo, in a Dahabeeyeh for Korusko. That forenoon I had had an interview with Abbas Pacha, the viceroy of Egypt, who had, in my travels of last year, shown the same kindness and interest. I hope his preference for the English, his urbanity towards them, and anxiety to improve the transit through Egypt, are appreciated by our Government. He certainly deserves the weight of its support against the encroachments of Stamboul, which are the work of other powers in revenge for his partiality to us.



We sailed with a fresh northerly breeze, under the light of a full moon and a cloudless sky; the Nile was at its height*, covering a vast expanse, sweeping away villages, or hurtling round their dykes, the breeze freshened to a gale, the waves were fighting against the stream, and our boat flew like a bird under the lofty headlands of the eastern chain of mountains. In five days we arrived at Keneh.

Having waited impatiently for the opening of the market, to purchase bread and other supplies, with coffee, which comes hither direct by the Cosseir road from Mocha, we sailed; but the wind failed, and our crew had to track the boat along the banks. The next four days were very tedious; we watched all night in vain for a breeze, whilst the crew slept heavily from their work, and the mornings came with the same slow laborious tracking, the rays of the sun striking upon us with their full force.

* The Nile rose this year to a remarkable height, far exceeding what had been known for many years. This was owing to the unusually heavy rains in Abyssinia and Soudan, which caused great sickness and mortality in those countries.

Our crew were eight light-limbed light-hearted Nubians with a rais and steersman, and by the help of Mohammed and incessant callings on "the Prophet" they hauled away cheerily. It was heavy work, for the Nile was now decreasing, and they had to plunge through mud and swim canals. It is astonishing how they endure, and with what uninterrupted good nature they emulate each other. Stripped of everything but their white skull caps, they dragged the boat from day-break till sunset, and their meals were water, bread, and lentils. After this a light northerly breeze occasionally sprang up, and on the evening of the 22d of September, in exactly eleven days from Cairo, we arrived at Assouan. In approaching we passed several villages to which our boatmen belonged, and it was a pretty sight to see how all the people, young and old, turned out to welcome them. It was a running fire of Salaam Aleikom, Allāh yasalemak* for miles. Oppression seems to bind them more closely together; nature is too elastic to be subdued by poverty. The scenery now begins to resemble Nubia,

* Peace be on you ! God bless you !




and, whether from the greater richness of the Nile or the increased heat, the date tree flourishes in the greatest perfection. Instead of the single slender stem we have hitherto passed, they grow in prolific clusters from the same root. I have counted as many as fourteen full-grown trees all rising from the same stock.

Assouan, as it is now pronounced by the natives, would mean granite, and the fact of the rocks here changing from sandstone to the beautiful Syenitic granite would lead to the supposition that this was the meaning of the word; I believe, however, from its being spelt differently in former times, that it has some other interpretation.* It is the limit of the two countries; the Nile rushing through the narrow gorge of Nubia, flows hence through the valley of Egypt without one single impediment. In its course from Assouan to Cairo it keeps close under the eastern range of hills in a direction parallel to the Red Sea, through the heart of the African desert. The western range, after leaving the

* Assouan may mean "the corrupting of the waters."

narrow defile of the cataract at Assouan, runs closely parallel as far as the Gebel Silsili. It then gradually diverges, but approaches occasionally in a bold curve, as in the high land opposite Thebes, at Girgeh and Sioot. Their formation is sand and limestone, which lie in perfectly horizontal strata, their summit a flat table-land, their sides often vertical. They seem constructed by the hand of the Almighty :—a great nation would learn from them to be simple and colossal in its architecture. The valley of the Nile ceases near Cairo ; the western range merging into the level of the desert, the eastern turning off towards Suez, and the Nile, no longer confined, expands into the Delta.

In all this valley not a blade of grass, not a drop of water can be found, that is not fed by the Nile ; all above the level of its fertilising waters is a burning desert. The river is at its highest about the first of September, remaining stationary for a few days, covering a vast expanse, and filling the canals that run along the western desert. It leaves a rich deposit, renewing the surface of the country every year, and as its waters recede, the soil is kept




moist and fertile by irrigation. This is done chiefly with the bucket and pole worked by the rudest manual labour, or where the bank is steep, with wheels driven by oxen. At this time of the year the crops under cultivation are cotton, indigo, doora baidā, barmieh, and other vegetables; to be succeeded in the winter by beans, wheat, barley, and doora safra or Indian corn. The villages of the Fellahs are a collection of huts made of unburnt bricks or date leaves stuccoed with mud, about eight feet high, pulverised by the sun, a heap of dirt and dust standing on the accumulated rubbish of centuries. A grove of date trees surrounds them, which readily marks their site, and their appearance at a distance is often improved by a number of pigeon-houses built like turrets.

And this is the abode of a human being, the fellah of Egypt, who goes to his work day after day, from early dawn till dark, working naked in the sun, often even without a covering to his head or loins, standing all day in the water, raising it by a bucket, digging a trench with his hands or cutting the mud with his feet, and his labour is not for himself, but for a


grinding master. With all this he preserves the beauty of the human form, his countenance is serene, and he answers the passing traveller with a graceful salutation.* To say that he is happy because he knows no better, is it not making his condition worse? The women are frightfully ugly, and their dress most dismal,—a large sheet or wrapper of dull blue drawn over the head and body and held across the face. See them squatting on the banks where they go to fill their water-jars, uttering a mournful cry, they look like evil spirits waiting to be carried across the river of death. The cattle consist chiefly of herds of buffaloes, oxen, and a small breed of goats and sheep. The oxen are very remarkable for the beauty of their form, and the sheep are valuable for their wool, which is woven into a very fine close texture by the women. There is no timber except the graceful date tree; a few Dôm or Theban palms, acacias, and sycamore

* The salutations amongst the Mahommedans are very numerous, and can never be too frequently given. One of the prettiest and most commonly used between strangers is, "Peace be on you!" to which the other will reply, "On you be peace, with the mercy of God and his blessing!"



trees adorn the landing places of the principal towns, or are met with occasionally near the larger villages. The Bender, or, as the name implies, the market-towns, from being the seats of government of the district, and the centres of the caravan trade with the interior, possess some few streets and bazaars; but with the exception of Sioot, which is the capital of Upper Egypt, their appearance is sufficiently wretched.

From the nature of the country the Nile is the best and only road for traffic, and the boats are very remarkable for the beauty of their form, their sails, and their capacity. They are admirably adapted to the purpose. Their form is like a long wedge both above and below water, giving excellent cabin accommodation, with a short mast stepped forward in the bow, and on it a yard of immense length working at the top, spreading a latteen sail. The prevailing wind is northerly, and setting these huge sails before it, they keep close in shore and stem the current with great facility. In descending, laden with the produce of the country, they lower the yard down and row in the middle of the stream. The



water of the Nile is of a deep brown colour, and when drawn in a glass or basin it looks still more strongly discoloured. The earth it contains is called in Arabic "ableez," which means fat or grease, and is an extremely soft and oily substance. When poured over the body the water runs like oil, and when filtered through an earthen jar is deliciously light to drink. I observed its temperature to vary little in the course of the day; with the atmosphere ranging round 80° it would keep at about 78° , but with the thermometer as high as 100° , it never exceeded 83° .



CHAPTER II.

NUBIA.




CHAPTER II.

NUBIA.

SEPTEMBER 23rd.—To-day, after an early visit from the Governor, we sailed with a light breeze and a strong crew to pass the cataract. This is merely a name at a period of the year when the Nile is at its highest; it is a rapid which a boat with a moderate and steady breeze could stem. But the wind with us was partial, and gave the boatmen an opportunity of displaying their marvellous skill in swimming. In laying out a rope across one of the rapids, the man found the current too strong, and had to relinquish it. On this the Sheikh, an elderly man of large proportions, sprang overboard, and himself performed the feat, showing a most wonderful power. Holding the rope, he laid himself horizontally in the water, with his head buried under it in the same straight line, like a fish, and mastered

the stream. Last year, when the Nile had fallen considerably, and was rushing down the rapid with high topping waves, I saw these men, for the sake of a few paras, ride down it on the short stump of a tree, and one, more hardy than the others, sprang headlong from the rock and swam resolutely towards it. To me it seemed certain death. Retreat was vain; already the current had seized its victim, and each moment with fast increasing volume was sucking him into its bosom. And then down it launched him in the raging flood; but there was a gallant soul in that seemingly helpless form; he knew that the same waves that sought his destruction would soon land him on a tranquil beach. And this he did for the prospect of a trifle more reward.

Our crew joined us above Philæ, for I had let them land at their villages during the preceding day, and by 11 o'clock the same forenoon the latteen sail was again spread to a light northerly breeze on our way to Korusko. There is an increase in the heat. At 3 p. m. abreast of Dabod, the thermometer, standing apart in the shade in the coolest part of the boat, but removed from the draft, stood at



100°; the temperature of the water was 82°, and the aneroid 29·55. The afternoon range previously during the light calm weather had been 96°.

September 24th.—At daybreak we met the Governor of the province in his boat on a tour of inspection. He immediately came aboard to offer his services, and sent a letter by runners to the people at Korusko to prepare us camels for the journey. We had a pleasant conversation. He was an elderly man, a native of Bulgaria, and had been some thirty years in the country. He left us a lamb in the boat as a present, as the Governor of Assouan had also done. The wind soon after failed, and then sprang up from the southward, blowing with the heated air of an oven. We could make no progress, being close to the narrowest part of the Nile, where the granite rocks rise precipitous, and the stream runs through with considerable rapidity. It is called the Bab El Kalabsheh. I took advantage of the delay to measure its breadth in the narrowest part, and made it 217 yards. Nowhere in the whole course of its navigation is the Nile so contracted; its breadth at the

Gebel Silsili, the only contraction in the valley of Egypt, is mentioned in the chart as being 566 yards. The sun crossed the equator this evening at 6 o'clock, when the atmosphere became very much agitated, and continued so during the night. It blew a hot wind from the south-west, with lightning and a few drops of rain, changing suddenly into hard squalls from the northward.

Korusko, September 27th.—After a tedious succession of calms, with the thermometer at 100°, and little relief during the night except from the flies, we arrived here at noon on the 16th day from Cairo. The authorities of the place immediately attended, and made arrangements that we should start to-morrow across the desert to Barbar.

As our journey now commences, I must introduce my friend and companion, Mr. Churi. He is a Maronite of the Lebanon, twenty-five years of age, who left his country when a boy to be brought up at the Propaganda College at Rome. After receiving the highest religious education he left to make his fortune in the world without a shilling in his pocket, but with a pure heart, a gifted intellect, and a

most implicit reliance on Divine Providence. He passed through France, and settled in England, giving lessons in Arabic and Italian. I made his acquaintance about a year ago, through my wish to learn Arabic for the purpose I am now pursuing, and was so much struck by his earnest teaching and his high character, that I asked him to accompany me on a visit to the East. It was to prepare myself for this higher task. We made a most happy tour, being absent from England exactly four months, having ascended the Nile to the second cataract, then traversed the Desert by Mount Sinai and Akaba, visited the sacred scenes of the Holy Land, and returned by Beirout home. He renewed his teaching; he was fond of it, and had excellent scholars; and I was an idle man, but bent upon my purpose. He refused to accompany me. The time was approaching; delay would have been fatal: I asked him again, for the last time and at the last moment; he agreed, and ever since that has never faltered. A more virtuous or religious-minded man I never knew; he is a firm friend, jealous of my honour, and would face any danger to serve me.

Korusko is in latitude $22^{\circ} 36' N.$, and the breadth of the Nile, which here flows in its full majesty, giving a fair expression of its magnitude, is 614 yards.

The features of Nubia between the first and second cataracts are totally distinct from those of Egypt. The Nile is confined in a narrow valley of steep rocky hills, whose sides are blackened by the sun, and have been broken into fragments by some great convulsion. The granite range extends to Kalabshah, its strata are thrown up vertically, and rise in the most fantastic forms. The sandstone formation is then resumed. The alluvium from the Nile on either side is very little, a narrow band of soil frequently interrupted, and from the bed of the river being rock, and therefore remaining at the same constant depth, most of it has become raised above the inundation by the deposit from the constant irrigation. In Egypt the bed of the river rises equally with the soil. The irrigation is done by the wheel, driven by oxen, and turning a chain of water-jars, which admits of being lengthened as the river falls. It is inclosed in a rude building, often

picturesque, resembling at a distance some old tower covered with creepers. A boy sits driving the oxen; his shrill cry and the creaking of the wheel are the music of Nubia. Day or night it never ceases. The taxes these poor people pay are levied chiefly upon their means of irrigation. Three hundred piastres, or 3*l.*, are laid upon each waterwheel, and the half of that on the bucket and pole called the Shadoof. This latter is employed in Nubia only where the land is low, or where it is not sufficiently large to support the charge of the other, or, most likely, where they are too poor to afford its outlay. A tax of one piastre or five farthings is also imposed on every date tree, for the fruit of which Nubia is celebrated. It is their chief article of subsistence. The people live in houses on the rocks built of rough stones. Their character is superior to that of the Egyptian: perhaps the greater strength of the country, their being brought up among the rocks, and their extreme poverty, have made them more bold and independent.

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CHAPTER III.


THE DESERT.



CHAPTER III.


THE DESERT.

WE left Korusko at one o'clock on the day following our arrival, our party consisting of Churi and myself, an Egyptian cook, and the Couwass, an Arab guide, and four Arabs. We had thirteen dromedaries to carry ourselves, the baggage, and water. I had been busy the preceding night and all the morning with other affairs, and cared only to see there was sufficient water, and then mounted my camel, without giving another thought that it was to cross the Nubian desert. My seat was an old sheep skin thrown over the wooden frame of the saddle, and instead of a water bottle I carried an aneroid. In a few minutes we had left life and vegetation behind, and were in all the sterility of the Desert. Our way lay amongst blackened hills and broken granite rocks, through a succession of wadys in a S.S.E. direction. We marched in silence,




our camels advancing in line abreast over the broad pavement of close-packed sand. There was not a blade of grass, not even a withered straw, the remnant of some partial winter vegetation, and the heat was intense, a hot south wind blowing from the rocks with the breath of a furnace, and the sand was glaring with light. We halted at seven o'clock that night, but only to feed the camels; there was no time to make a fire; we therefore drank water and ate onions for our dinner. The march was then resumed. I never was more fatigued; my tongue was parched and the throat painfully swollen by the hot south wind. We came to a halt at twenty minutes past one o'clock, when I stretched my poor body on the sand to sleep, and my mind wandered by the side of rippling streams in the earthly paradise of England. At 5.15, having drunk water only for our breakfast, we were again on the march, and went on till 8.20 under the sickening heat of a morning sun, without food. Our halting place was on the side of a hill, under a deep ledge, which afforded shade till noon. The Arabs told us we were to sleep, and showed us the example,

but the mind was too active, and I felt the necessity of supporting the body with food. I eagerly asked what we had brought, and then learnt that we had come to cross this desert without a stick of fire wood, with no meat, no eggs, no vegetables, for even the onions were gone. I turned with the fierceness of an African tornado. What was the use of a Couwass? What was the use of a cook? what was the use even of my faithful Churi? The cook and the couwass retired, but Churi's temper is imperturbable, and he loves me too well to care for my hasty words. He said he had tried his best; he thought I knew there was nothing. The fiery passion soon fell at his soft answer, and I asked kindly to know what there really was besides our tea and coffee. There was only a bag of rice and some stale bread, which we had bought at Esné, and had baked in the sun. We then made a fire with camel's dung and boiled the coffee and rice. This was our only food in crossing the Desert, and it came twice a day; it was boiled rice and coffee in the morning, boiled tea and rice in the evening. Churi's diet was still more simple, for he con-



fined himself almost entirely to soaked bread and water. The thermometer here at noon, under the shade of the deep rock, and held apart from the side, was 108° , the sky cloudless, with a moderate breeze from the southward. The aneroid had fallen considerably; its lowest range during the day's march was 28.25, being a difference of an inch and a quarter from what it was at Korusko, which gives an elevation of eleven hundred and thirty feet above the level of the Nile at that place. We left at 12.15 and marched till 6.15, when we halted an hour and a half for the evening meal, and at ten o'clock left the hills through which we had hitherto been travelling, and entered upon a vast plain of sand. There was an instant relief from the oppressive heat and the hot suffocating wind. The air of the plain was fresh and even cold. We halted at 2 A.M. The rocky country from which we had emerged lay to the northward, running in an east and west direction like a bold sea coast, and the vast plain, softened by the moonlight into a perfect level, seemed boundless as the ocean. It is the halt in the Desert by night that forms so sublime a scene.

Men, camels, and baggage lie stretched upon the plain; all are still and scattered, yet all seem bound together, all seem passing away; there is no other shadow but theirs to stain the soft purple of the sand. And yet there is a melancholy in the Desert, and a gloom in the breast, that you cannot dispel. Though lying in the vaulted chamber of the skies, the thoughts are not heavenly; they turn, they cling to all that is earthly. Why are they not heavenly? What is there between you and eternity? Are you not here alone. No, though you have left life behind, you are not alone, Death is your companion, it stares you in the face at every step. Take care or you will stumble over its victim. Leave the road, you perish; follow the track of the caravan, and rotting carcasses are its milestones. Why is the voice of the caravan so hushed, and why do you urge your camel's speed? See! your spirit is wounded; you are musing on a secret in your own breast, and yet it is known to all. Look at that horrid object that lay in your path, his head turned back, and his mouth wide open; he wanted water, Death has mocked him and



choked it with sand; he wanted air, the wind is laughing through his ribs; he struggled to reach his journey's end, his feet are striking in the air. It is not Death that scares you; it is its insult that you cannot avenge; the curse of mortality, the disgust of Nature; it is corruption stinking in the nostrils of heaven. Happy are we who have been taught the blessed hope that this corruption is the seed of incorruption, the pledge of immortality.

Tuesday, the 30th September. — We left in the morning at 5.15, the thermometer only 68°, the aneroid 28.50, and halted at 8.20, taking refuge from the sun in a cavern on the side of a hill. At noon, in its coolest place, the heat was 106°, the aneroid 28.30. I will here quote the words of my note-book: — "This is the third day in the desert, and my frame is too much exhausted for me to attempt to describe it." But nature rallied after this; and though weak and unable to walk long, I sat on my camel without feeling fatigue. We left at 1 p.m., stopped at 6.15, left at 8, and arrived at half-past 12 at a mass of hills that bordered the plain we had hitherto been traversing. We left in the

morning at 5.45, stopped at 8.15, left at 1.30, and arrived at the well in the middle of the desert at sunset, October the 1st.

In the morning of this day, at 5.30, the thermometer was 76° , and the aneroid 28.46. But I will here copy an extract from my notebook of those instruments, which on every occasion was written at the instant:—

“Noon, under the shade of a sond-tree, close to the ground and near it, the coolest place, away from the draft; aneroid 28.461, thermometer 103° ; a strong southerly wind, as hot as a furnace, painfully oppressive, cloudless sky; so oppressive, that a poor bird came to take a refuge in the same place, though aware of my presence. I put my hand out, and caught it; it was quite overcome. We gave it some water, which it took most greedily, and set it free; but it was too weak, and after flying short distances, it lay down on the sand to die. The place the bird came to was by the bark in the sond-tree, close to the ground, and which I found, by the thermometer, to be the coolest place. The heat of the sand at noon was 140° . The surface sand was piled up round the thermometer, but it

was too hot for more than a passing touch. At the same time I tried the temperature of some water in an earthen jar, placed on the ground, close under the shade of the tree. It was 69° .* The thermometer was then suspended from a thorn on the sond-tree, eight feet from the ground, playing in the breeze, and in the full sunshine. It stood only at 109° . The air is so rarified, that when looking at any object of moderate height, it seems to be running between, like a stream of the purest water. I have made these observations here, not from any peculiarity in the day, but because the place was extremely favourable for an impartial determination. It was in a broad winter watercourse, worn about four feet deep, the north side of the horizon formed by a range of dark-coloured hills, the south open to the sand. The nearest hills were half a mile, the others distant."

On entering the mass of hills of this day's

* This remarkable difference of temperature, amounting to 34° between the water in the jar and the atmosphere, precisely similar to that of a wet and dry bulb thermometer, shows the extraordinary dryness of the air in this desert.

journey, we observed several trees even of a large growth, growing in the watercourses that are formed in the rainy season from the hills. They were sodd and palm trees, but there was no herbage, not even its withered remains. The wells of Mourad, for there are three, lying close to each other, have been rudely excavated about ten feet deep, and stand in a little amphitheatre formed by the high surrounding hills. Their water is very brackish, but it varies in the different wells and in the seasons. There is no vegetation round them, nothing to mark their inestimable treasure; and the rocks look pitilessly down, gathering in high peaks blackened with heat. Our camels went down to drink with the same patient but indomitable step; it was the first time they had slaked their thirst since leaving the Nile, and before them was a desert only half passed through. We filled our waterskins also, preferring its brackish taste to the filthy liquid they now contained. That night my thoughts dwelt on the unhappy English family who had to cross this desert, only about eight months back, under the deepest affliction. It was the family of Mr. Melly, who took with

him his wife, a daughter, and a young lad, his son, and travelled as far as Khartoum. But on his return he was seized with fever and died near Aboo Hamed. Is it possible to imagine a more awful blow? One of our Arabs who was with them, said they were weeping the whole time.

We left the wells at 12.10 the following day; and after the evening halt of an hour and a half, marched till half-past two. Left again on Friday morning at 5.30, and with the same time as before for meals, we marched till half-past 12. Left again on Saturday morning at 5.30, and arrived at Aboo Hamed that night, or on Sunday morning, at half-past 2.

On leaving the Nubian wells, we passed from the group of hills that surround them, and entered upon plains of sand, occasionally interrupted by lofty granite ranges. These massive rocks look like coal, so blackened have they been by the intense heat. The plains of sand must be of great depth, having covered all the inequalities of the ground, leaving only the summits of the highest hills standing above, like islands in the sea. Though appa-

rently level, they dip rapidly towards their centres. Their temperature at night was very pleasant, being from 70° to 75° , but the heat rises rapidly with the sun, and at noon was very oppressive. The last day, Saturday, was the most trying of all. We were traversing a vast plain that stretches to Abou Hamed, and it was blowing a fierce east wind. There was no shelter on the ground for our morning meal, but we stretched a white cloth between our boxes, and lay beneath. I will copy the note-book.

“ Noon—stopping on the great open pebbly plain that extends to Abou Hamed, a large cloth spread over between our boxes for a shelter from the sun, and under it protecting ourselves still farther by double lined umbrellas: — a strong easterly wind, quite intolerable; thank God, this is the last day in the desert. The aneroid 28.62; the thermometer under our strongest shade, but exposed to the wind, 110° . So oppressive, worse than ever is the heat, that again I caught by the hand a little bird that took refuge in our shade: we refreshed it with water, and it went away as merry as a lark, always hopping for shade

under the camel's legs. Observed columns of sand driving over the plain." We arrived at Abou Hamed at 2.30 in the night or on Sunday morning, and, after taking a long draught of delicious water, threw ourselves down to sleep on the edge of the desert, but on the bank of the Nile.

This is my description of the Nubian Desert ; and now perhaps some other traveller will come, not bound for such distant regions, and therefore choosing his own time and moving with conveniences. He will go in the winter season, or, perhaps, after some great tropical rain. He will see the water dashing down the burns and carving a channel through the sand ; the face of the desert will be refreshed ; he will not be pained by the hot south wind, or scorched by the glaring sand, and will he, therefore, say that I have exaggerated ? I could not wish him a severer punishment than that he might be made to traverse it at the same season and in the same time.


CHAPTER IV.

BARBAR.

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BARBAR.

SUNDAY morning, October 5. — We rose at daybreak, and pitched our tent where we had slept, and oh! what a change that morning revealed. The Nile was flowing beneath, and in front was an island green with the sugar cane and waving with palm trees. We stopped here two days to refresh ourselves and the camels; it is a scattered village of mud houses, busy with the arrival or departure of caravans. There were many Arabs here; tall muscular men, with intelligent countenances, their skin extremely dark, almost approaching to black. They wear the hair long and closely curled, much in the same manner as we see represented in the Nineveh slabs. It gives them a martial appearance. Their arms are a long sword, the shield and spear; and they carry also a short stabbing knife at the elbow. A long white cloth drawn round the waist and thrown



over the shoulder forms their dress, the head is uncovered, and they walk in sandals.

The Nile at Aboo Hamed is of great breadth, and in the centre is a chain of long beautiful islands highly cultivated. There are no boats, but the people swim across the stream on inflated skins, gathering their clothes in a high turban round the head, or they form rafts of grass and the green straw of the doora which they bring for fodder to the camels, and on them they place their other produce. A short distance below, and the Nile turns sharp to the westward, running over beds of rock and rapids that prevent its navigation. It is to avoid this great detour that the line of communication lies straight through the Nubian Desert. Our tent, although made for a tropical climate, being open at both ends and with ventilation at the top, was so intolerably hot that I never used it again. We always slept on the ground and in the open air. This made our travelling very expeditious. In halting at night, we only had to make a fire for our supper, and then fell off to sleep; and when the morning star rose, started to our feet, and, with the harsh ringing cry of



"Yallah," were already on the march. The thermometer was suspended in the coolest part of the tent, but I forgot to look at it till just before sunset. It stood then at 114° , but must have been higher in the afternoon, particularly at half-past two, which is the hottest time of the day, for I found my white beaver hat had collapsed from the heat. Our two days here passed very pleasantly, for existence alone was a pleasure after so toilsome a march, and I lived like a water-rat, creeping out of the tent to dive into the stream below.

We left on Tuesday the 7th of October, and early next morning, when near the village of Gageh, passed Mr. Melly's tomb, which is in the desert by the wayside, laid amongst Moslem graves. It is nine feet long and two feet six inches in height, built neatly of sun-burnt bricks rising in steps. I went to kneel by its side, and then carefully restored what little damage the heat and the wind had done. The course from Aboo Hamed to Barbar runs in a straight line at times close to the river, and then where it takes a bend, stretching for hours across some high plain of the desert; but all sense of weariness is removed at the sight

of the delicious Nile which runs through the midst, tracing a line of the deepest green. It is of great breadth, with a chain of beautiful islands running in the centre often two and three abreast. They are of the richest fertility, and seem jealously guarded from the devouring desert whose sands sweep down to the very banks of the river. But though no herbage can grow on their shifting surface, there is on either side a broad loose belt of wild dôm and sond trees, whose roots have struck down to the water, and which form a delicious shelter on the march. Here also are the villages of those who cultivate the islands; neat square-built houses with an open porch in front, far superior to the wretched hovels of the Egyptians. The people also have most excellent bed-frames raised about two feet from the ground; and how sweet seemed their slumber to us, lying under the porch in the luxury of a heavenly night. But any rest would have been sweet for those whose nights were passed in rocking on the back of the camel.

After traversing a high plain of the desert, we arrived on Friday morning at Kenaniet.

I mention this, because it is the first place where we met with any considerable cultivation at the river's side; before, it had been confined to the islands or to some small plots by a village. Our camels here tasted green food for the first time since leaving Korusko. The Nile also begins to be navigable here, being obstructed below by several rapids. It is from Kenaniet upwards that the river changes its features: it is no longer threatened by the desert, and the inundation fertilises a wide plain. We enter upon a second Egypt.

Early on Saturday, the 11th of October, having travelled with the same long journeys, but not at the same rapid pace as through the Nubian Desert, we arrived at Barbar, and encamped in a garden by the river side, with the shade of a sycamore tree for our tent.


Barbar is the capital, and it is also the limit of Nubia, whose inhabitants are still called Barabras, from which comes the Greek word for barbarians. All above is the country of Soudan. It is in latitude $17^{\circ} 59'$ north by meridian altitude of Sirius; its more common name in the country is El Moukharef. It is a large clean town, the houses stand apart,

enclosed by a separate court-yard built of baked mud, and the sharp angle of their sides gives them a very neat appearance. The Governor of the place showed us great attention: he was an Albanian, and I dined with him surrounded by his countrymen: he sent us a present of two sheep.

The Barabras seem an indigenous race, totally distinct from either Arab or Negro. They have classic features, and light well proportioned limbs, and I have seen many with an air of great beauty and refinement.

We parted with our Arabs here; better men for a journey I never met. They were poor looking in appearance, but had used their utmost diligence, and were respectful and obedient. The guide had a thorough knowledge of the road, and through the darkest night, and among black heaps of rocks, had led us in confidence on his dromedary, never speaking a word. The others were the drivers, and in crossing the Nubian Desert, never more than one would be riding at a time, the others marched on foot. The song is better than the whip or spur to urge the camels, so they sang the whole march through, and whenever we

came upon broken ground, or passed from one wady to another, they shrieked with all their lungs upon a Sheikh Abd El Kader, the Patron of the Camel. They hold him in superstitious reverence. Though not muscular, their powers of endurance were marvellous, for more than half the time taken in the journey was passed on the march under the severest heat, and at every halt they had to load and unload the camels. Like all Mussulmen, the Arabs can never open their lips or speak a word without using the name of the Almighty. Yes, no, ah, go on, and all other simple and frequent terms, are expressed by that sacred name, varied with the prefix of a letter, as Yallah, Wallah, Lillah, Mashallah, Inshallah, and others. They cannot put the saddle on the camel's back, or remove it, make him kneel, or rise up, or give him his food, without doing it in the name of "Allah;" and whenever he trips on the march, one calls out "Al Naby," the prophet, and the other will answer "In the name of Allah," or "Bismillah." They have also the characteristic vice of all Mussulmen, and which is the fruit of the Mahommedan religion, — the most



absorbing selfishness. That religion may have been borrowed in part from the Bible, but it has passed over the divine precept of doing unto others as you would they should do unto you. Invested with the brief authority of an hour, and each man uses it with the most grinding despotism. Nothing can pass through his hands but what something remains to serve his purpose, and he will trample on the feelings of others to gain his end. There is a mutual mistrust and suspicion. I will give an example. At Aboo Hamed, the Monday was a great feast day of the Arabs, and we stopped to let them enjoy it. I had refused to give any backsheesh whilst on the journey, but gave the guide a few piastres to buy a sheep for them all. The day wore on, but our Arabs, though gaily dressed like the others, kept sitting round the tent. We asked them if they had roasted their sheep, they expressed astonishment, and said there was nothing for them to eat. The guide was sent for, and though clearly convicted before them all of having kept it a secret, and retained the money, it was impossible to raise a blush on his hardened face ; he was only astonished at

our taking it up so warmly. The piastres were then given to the others amidst great crying and abuse, but five minutes after, knowing each would have done the same, they and the conductor were in perfect harmony.

In crossing the Nubian Desert I paid constant attention to the march of the camels, hoping it may be some service hereafter in determining our position. The number of strides in a minute with the same foot varied very little, only from 37 to 39, and 38 was the average; but the length of the stride was more uncertain, varying from 6 feet 6 to 7 feet 6. As we were always urging the camels, who seemed, like ourselves, to know the necessity of pushing on across that fearful tract, I took 7 feet as the average. These figures give a speed of 2·62 geographical miles per hour, or exactly three English miles, which may be considered as the highest speed that camels lightly loaded can keep up on a journey. In general, it will not be more than two and a half English miles. My dromedary was one of the tallest, and the seat of the saddle was 6 feet 6 above the ground.

CHAPTER V.

KHARTOUM.

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KHARTOUM.

ON our arrival at Barbar, as the wind promised to hold from the northward, we immediately engaged a boat to sail to Khartoum, and on Sunday morning, the 12th of October, at 7 o'clock, we left, happy with a fresh northerly breeze. But it was too good for our wretched craft, and a squall carried away the slings of the yard, and all the rigging. And so she went on, full of misfortunes; when the breeze freshened, furling the tattered sail, or running ashore to patch a leak. Unhappy boatmen of the Nile! on whose boat I step; they find an iron hand is ruling them. They think to sleep at night, but "Yallah" is my cry, for the breeze is rustling the palm trees. I do not want them to drag the boat along the bank like beasts of burden, but I do want them to exercise the intelligence of men, and

spread the sail at night. But no, they are afraid, and the Rais who is responsible is a coward. What scenes take place! they sail, but I must not lie down to sleep or relax the command. My temper flows much more evenly with the Arabs of the desert, for they know their duty well.

We passed the river Atbara at noon on the following day: it flows from the eastward, and comes from Abyssinia, being influenced by the same rise and fall as the Nile. At this time of the year it is navigable upward to a great distance. It is the only tributary of the Nile, and its breadth at the junction might be 300 yards. Its latitude, carried back from an observation at night, is about $17^{\circ} 38'$. The boatmen told us there were many hippopotami; and almost immediately afterwards we saw for the first time three of these enormous creatures playing in the water. Its temperature was 82° , and the atmosphere 93° . Thursday morning we passed Shendy, which is a large bender town, half way between Barbar and Khartoum. It is in latitude $16^{\circ} 38'$ north.

In describing the country through which

we are sailing, I cannot do better than repeat that it is a second Egypt. The desert on either side runs at a low level, and generally at a distance, and the breadth between is a fertile plain irrigated by the inundation. Most of it is unoccupied, and covered with long grasses. It produces every thing that grows in Upper Egypt, but the people are poor and ignorant, and have no market for their produce. They raise it only for their own consumption. All that they send to Egypt are cattle, which are remarkable for their beauty, and all that passes through the country from above are slaves, gum-arabic, and ivory. The date tree may be said to cease near Shendy, the last of them in any number are in a long range at the village of Mougaweir, reminding one strongly of the scenery in Egypt; and the Dôm or Theban palm, which is the principal tree between Barbar and Aboo-Hamed, is also seldom seen above. Their place is supplied by the sond or gum-arabic tree, which often thickly clothes the bank of the river and the border of the desert. It is almost the only tree. The villages also show that we have changed

the climate, and are in range of the heavy summer rain of the Tropics. They are placed on the desert or on dry ground, and the houses are of a circular form, roofed with a thatched cone. They are neat and clean-looking, and show that the people preserve a higher personal respect than the base Egyptian. But their minds are as level as the land they cultivate; they work hard, and yet they only exist. The land is irrigated, as in Nubia, by waterwheels, which are of superior construction, but they have scarcely any agricultural implements. A man goes with a sharp-pointed stick and presses it into the ground, whilst another follows behind to drop the seed.


“ The higher Nilus flows

The more it promises; as it ebbs, the seedsman
Upon the slime and ooze scatters his grain,
And shortly comes to harvest.”

Such is the industry of the East; their work is only for the day, the face of the country remains unimproved, and each succeeding year the labour of the past must be renewed. How different from the noble industry of the West. There the mind is active, the labour is intelli-

gent, and its fruit is permanent. It is a fight and a victory over the self-willed elements of Nature, and every step facilitates a further progress.

October 17th.—The higher we ascend the purer becomes the water, and we have noticed this in the whole voyage from Sioot. It seemed to be most discoloured there, darker than at Cairo, but there is a marked difference between Korusko and Sioot; it is still more striking at Aboo Hamed, and at Barbar its colour has become rather of an opaque white. In writing on Egypt I described the water as being of a deep brown, and when drawn in a glass or basin that it looked still more strongly discoloured. No stranger would drink it there until it had at least settled, and then half would be rejected; but here where I am writing, which is one day's sail above Shendy, the taste would be very fastidious that could not drink it from the river. If allowed to settle, the deposit is very small, and like fine sand. Its touch also is quite different; in Egypt it was so soft I compared it to oil. The greatest amount of sediment, or "ableez," will of course be at the time of the highest



inundation, and as the waters recede into their natural channel they rapidly become purer. Still I think the "ableez" that fertilises Egypt can only be in part from the mountains of Abyssinia. A large portion must be supplied by the sands of the desert. They sweep over its surface in its whole course from Khartoum, particularly in the long-winding course from Kenaniet downwards to Wady Halfeh; and though the atmosphere seems so pure, there is almost always a darkened haze on the horizon, which comes from the driving of the sand. I remember on the march to Barbar going down to the river where shifting sand-hills formed the bank; a high wind was blowing, and the sand beat against my hat with the noise of heavy rain.

The Nile here flows for about three miles in an east and west direction, under a range of cliffs of the desert. Its highest rise was distinctly marked on the vertical face of a rock, and showed that it had now fallen 83 inches. Further on, at the western and highest end, called "the Hill of Leopards," the traveller will see two petrified trees in the middle of the cliff,—one a large one, whose trunk is pro-

jecting straight from the rock. I went back, and Churi with the boatmen lowered me down by a rope to measure it. Its circumference, measured just above the swelling of the roots, is 10 feet; the tree was a little hollow, and its thin bark can be easily distinguished. It lies on a bed of gravel between the sandstone, and evidently extends far inside.


On coming into the province of Khartoum, which begins at the Hagar El Asal, or the Honey Rock, we find red granite rising above the surface in singular heaps of stones, and which often stretch across the bed of the river, obstructing its navigation. At last they form a high bold range of mountains in the middle of the plain, running in a north-west and south-east direction, through which, to his great surprise, the traveller finds the Nile has run. They are called the Gebal Karry. The course of the Nile is through a narrow winding defile, very picturesque. I measured its breadth in one of the narrowest parts at the northern entrance, and made it 290 yards; but soon after we passed another point, which seemed much more contracted, narrower even than the Bab El Kalabsheh. The northern entrance

is in lat. $16^{\circ} 22'$ N., by meridian altitude of Fomalhaut. The name of this fine star, which is often used at sea, and is in the constellation of the Southern Fish, is purely Arabic, signifying the mouth of the fish.

On leaving the Karry range we pass two very remarkable granite mountains rising alone from the plain; one of them is called Gebel El Rouyan, or the Irrigated Mountain, being surrounded by the Nile; its brother, less fortunate, being in the desert, is called Gebel El Atshan, or the Thirsty Mountain.

Thursday, October the 23rd.—We arrived at Khartoum soon after sunrise, in exactly six weeks from Cairo, and made our home at the Roman Catholic Mission, who kindly offered us their hospitality. What a luxury, after twelve days' confinement in a dirty boat, alive with rats and insects, and dead with a stupid crew, to find ourselves in a large room, a beautiful garden, and under the pleasing influence of a religious community. We immediately went to pay our respects to the Governor-general of all these upper provinces, of which Khartoum is the capital, Latif Pasha; and, after the first few compliments, told him

of our wish to go to Darfoor. He started with surprise, and said it was quite impossible, for the people there would instantly murder us. It was the same language we had heard along the whole road from Korusko; so I told him I was determined to go, and all that I would ask of his Excellency, knowing his influence, would be to send a letter to the King of Darfoor, saying that an Englishman wished to pass through his country. I then showed him the firman from Abbas Pacha, and as he was the first I had met who could read its Turkish character, he kindly interpreted it. He said it was a most unusual document, ordering, among other things, that all the governors were to pay great attention, and to provide me with every thing I asked for, and whoever did not do his utmost to please me would be punished. I told him that it had been quite unasked for, that it came entirely from the personal kindness of Abbas Pacha, his respect for the English, and because I was the son of the late Prime Minister of England. He returned our visit the same afternoon, gave us a sumptuous dinner in a style of barbaric pomp, and in our




short stay at Khartoum behaved as a personal friend, and, seeing we could not be dissuaded, entered with spirit into our views. If, please God, we succeed, it will be mainly due to the ability and hearty good will of Latif Pacha. Two days after our arrival he sent an express to the Sultan of Darfoor, with a letter written in the strongest terms, requesting that he would allow me to pass with safety through the country. I must also speak in the highest terms of the kind feeling that was shown towards me by the few Europeans here, and in particular of a young Armenian merchant named Mardaross, who was so proud of the Englishman that he gave me a quantity of useful beads to assist me in my journey.

Darfoor is a sealed country—it is the great and, I believe, only obstacle to a knowledge of the interior. The people are represented as having a blind hatred to the white face, whether Christian or Mussulman. They call them all Turks, who want to know the country, that they may conquer it. Doubtless there is much exaggeration in all this; but who that has known Turkish government or Turkish


warfare, would not bear a deadly hatred to the name ?

Khartoum, on the conquest of the country by the Egyptians only a few years back, did not even exist. It is now a very rising city, with an excellent bazaar, several gardens and date-tree plantations, and a large fleet of dahabeeyehs. From its position, it would soon, under a good government, become a place of the first importance.

Khartoum is an Arabic word, which means the gullet of the throat, and is so applied because the waters of the Blue and White Nile here flow into one stream. Their course hence seems almost a miracle ; surely the hand of the Almighty has traced it across the desert, that it might be the union of distant nations. Attacked on every side, receiving no supplies, but supporting an immense irrigation, threatened by the sand of the desert, or hemmed in by mountains, its surface lapped by a devouring heat, it holds on its course in all its unity and in all its majesty, and is as great at Cairo as at Khartoum. But there, when close to its home, and all difficulties conquered — sad parallel to human weakness — it falls into



the embrace of a delicious plain, and creeps ignobly into the sea. Its mission is not yet accomplished—it is waiting patiently to be the road to civilise Africa. But it is not an eastern nation, and not the Mahommedan religion, that can do it; and I am one of those who hope and believe that Providence will destine it for England. An English Government and a handful of Englishmen could do it and could keep it. I will not dwell on those dreams of ambition, that would turn the commerce of the East through Alexandria, and load the Nile with the riches of unknown countries, in exchange for the industry of millions. Cities would rise up at Assouan and at Khartoum, whose influence would be felt over the whole interior. I know, alas! the spirit of the age is against such thoughts; and there are even men who would wish to abandon our empire; but I speak the voice of thousands of Englishmen, who, like myself, have served their country abroad, and who do not love her least, who never will consent to relinquish an empire, that has been won by the sword, and who think the best way to preserve it is often by judicious extension. England is too small



for the energies of our youth — confined at home, and we should sink in luxury and corruption. Say you? we advance to a mighty crash. So pass all things away; but it will not be in our generation; we shall not live to feel its shame — a fallen race must read the epitaph of an empire: —

“ Alas! not dazzled by the noontide ray,
Compute the morn and evening to the day.
The whole amount of that enormous fame,
A tale that blends their glory with their shame.”

We remained here five days, and I took the following observations of the volume of the waters of the Blue and White Nile: —

Breadth of Bahr El Azrak, or the Blue Sea, just above its junction at Khartoum and opposite Government House on October 24. 1851, = 768 yards.

Its greatest depth = 19·42 feet, greatest current, 1·75 knots.

Average depth = 16·11 feet; average current, 1·564.

The mean of seven observations.

Taking a breadth of 760 yards (the banks being very steep), and multiplying it by the above averages, gives a volume of 5,820,600 cubic feet the minute.

Breadth of the Bahr El Abiad, or the White Sea, at Khartoum, immediately above its junction, on October the 25th, = 483 yards.

Its greatest depth = 21 feet; greatest current, 2·0 knots.

Average depth = 13·92 feet; average current, 1·47.

The mean of ten observations.

Taking a breadth of 480 yards for measure (one bank being steep to, the other gradually sloping), and multiplying it by the above averages, gives a volume of 2,985,400 cubic feet the minute.

Breadth of the river Nile immediately below the island of Tootah, or Mulberry Island, where the two rivers have united, on October 23rd, = 1107 yards.

Its greatest depth, 22·75 feet; greatest current, 2·50 knots.

Average depth, 14·38 feet; average current, 2·0.

The mean of seven observations.

Taking a breadth of 1090 yards for measure, and multiplying it by the above, gives a volume of 9,526,700 cubic feet the minute.

The two added together make 8·806000.

Difference ·720700.

This difference in the results is caused, I think, by an error in the volume of the Nile, whose bed at the place I measured was so irregular as to render it difficult to form an average. The temperature of both streams was exactly alike, being 81°, and their colour may be compared as yellow to brown, the latter being that of the Bahr El Azrak. The water of this river is very wholesome, that of the White Nile just the reverse.

The Blue Sea, as it is called, is considered by the natives to be the Nile, and the above

observations show that they are right; but many Europeans, deceived by the vast breadth of the White Nile (it was very contracted at the place I measured it), have supposed it to be the greater.

We regretted that Don Ignatio, the Vicar-General of the R. C. Missions in Africa, was absent in Europe. He had been a school-fellow of Churi's, and is a distinguished traveller, having ascended the White Nile to nearly the 4th degree of latitude. Nothing could exceed the kindness we received from the two worthy Padres who conduct the mission. Their means and their arms are feeble; one was aged, and the other broken with ague; but a school and a garden, which they are carefully rearing, must in due time reward their attention.

These are the prices of cattle at Khartoum, where of course they are higher than in the country:—

First class dromedary, 500 piastres, or 4*l.* 15*s.*

The camel from 150 to 300 „ or 1*l.* 8*s.* to 2*l.* 16*s.*

Oxen „ 30 to 60 „ or 6*s.* to 12*s.*

Large sheep, 10 piastres, or 2*s.*

Full-sized lamb, 3 piastres, or 8*d.*

CHAPTER VI.

KORDOFAN.




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WE left on Tuesday, the 28th of October, crossing over to the other side of the White Nile, where we were to find the camels to take us to Kordofan. The couwass, whom we had brought from Egypt, was too unwell to proceed, so Latif Pacha sent me his own; and the Sheikh of the Ababdeh Arabs, the most powerful tribe in Egypt, came to see me depart. But though governing so wide a domain, he had the pain of finding his orders had not been obeyed, for the camels were still in the desert grazing, and did not all arrive till midnight. He would not, however, think of leaving, but waited to see us depart in the morning. His name is Sheikh Ali Abd El Wakhed. He is verging towards old age, has a pleasing countenance, and is a good scholar. He gave us two letters to some people at Kordofan, who can be of service to us in the

interior. We slept that night on the ground, which had been lately covered by the river : it was evidently a very unhealthy place, and the people at the village were most of them ill. Next day our cook (the one we brought from Cairo had left us), and the servant of the couwass, were both seized with violent ague. But the march in the desert once commenced, there is no help for the poor sick man, he must go on till he dies or recovers. Ours, thank God, though no one helped them but we two Christian dogs, arrived, after much suffering, and recovered. The march, for the first four days, was to the northward, parallel to the river, through a vast plain of sand and gravel, broken only by a few solitary hills, and thickly covered with sond bushes and dry grass. It took us to Aboo Krat, the boundary of Kordofan, a wretched Arab village, where there are wells, and for a few weeks after the rains, a lake.

From thence our course lay to the southwest, through vast plains of red sand, sometimes thickly covered with sond trees and dry prickly grasses. There is no water to be found for eight months except at some brack-




ish wells, where there is generally an Arab village. Iron ore is found in considerable quantities on the surface of the ground, the manufacture from which forms the chief industrial employment of the people.

In six days more we arrived at Labeyed, the capital of Kordofan. I had a compass in my hand the whole journey, marking each course, with the bearings of the hills, their names, and a careful description of the country; and whenever the night was clear, took the latitude and longitude by lunar observations. It would be tedious to repeat them here : these only are the notes that may have interest in a journal.

November 2.—In the afternoon march of this day, the thermometer under the shade of the umbrella and on the camel, was 108°, although it was blowing a chilly north-east wind. The Arabs cried out, “Nar, Nar,” fire, fire, so intense was the heat.


November 6th.—The road to-day was through the same level country of red sand, covered with sond and hajleed trees. This latter, both in form of the tree and fruit, closely resembles the olive. Passed a great



flight of locusts, which gave the trees on which they alighted the appearance of being quite dead, so thickly they swarmed on every leaf and branch. They are used as food by the natives. At Tandar, there are several plots of cultivated ground. The bread here is made of a poor grain called "dokhn;" it is almost the only plant grown in Kordofan. We have passed from wheat to Indian corn, then to doora baida, and now to dokhn.

November 7th. — This morning's ride was through a level country of red sand, covered with eusha bushes; as usual, no object breaking the horizon. This shrub has a thick green leaf, full of milk-coloured juice. Though so inviting in appearance, it is poisonous, and the animal that eats it becomes blind. We pass occasionally some new unhappy slaves going to Khartoum. Though well guarded, they march secured by a long pole attached to the camel, with their necks thrust through a wooden triangle that is formed at the other end.


We met three free blacks to-day, Mahomedans, who are on a pilgrimage to Mecca with their wives and children, and had a long



conversation with them, for they were very intelligent. One came from Bergoo, another from Bornou, and the third from the country of the Felatahs. They drew maps on the sand of the country between Bornou and Darfoor, and the position of Kouka, of Loggun, and other places exactly agreed with Denham and Clapperton's map. They told us we should be well received.

At the village of Khoursi, even the Arabs could not sleep from the bugs.

November 7th.—The first course this afternoon was through a slightly elevated plateau in the centre of the plain, called El Akaba or the Heel, and we emerged from it by some enormous trees called Humra; their fruit is eaten and called Kangaloss. We measured one, whose diameter five feet from the ground was forty-two feet. The trunk is of great size, and after some twenty or thirty feet height of solid mass, separates into thick stumpy branches which render it extremely ugly. On arriving at night at some water by the Gebel Kobash, not far from Labeyed, a leopard was found close up among the camels. It was a bright moonlight, and some horse-




men, who happened to be there, made a fine but fruitless chase.

Every day on the journey we saw numerous gazelles, which often remained to within a spear's throw, and we also saw an ostrich. There were many ant-hills under the trees, looking at a distance like human habitations: they were six, eight, and ten feet high.


Our Arabs were all armed, and every one in the country carries two or three light spears.

We arrived at Labeyed late at night, and slept in the Government court-yard. Unfortunately, just after supper, or what answered for both dinner and supper, I caught sight of a water-carrier, and running up to him, stripped, and made him, no doubt to his great astonishment, pour a dozen water-skins over me. It seemed such a delight to revel in its cold shower after the dirt and fatigue of ten days' travelling. But it took away sleep, and the night air struck me with its poisonous breath whilst laying restless and impatient for daylight; to this unfortunate imprudence I attribute the severe fever which shortly followed.


In the morning we moved into a house ad-



joining the court which the Governor had kindly prepared for us, and shortly after, although very ill himself, he came across to see us. I told him of my wish to go on at once to Darfoor, so as not to lose any time, and to avoid the very sickly climate of this place. He strongly objected to this, until an answer should come from the Sultan, but at last gave way, and did everything to assist us. He agreed that I should go to the frontier of Darfoor, beyond which even the Arabs cannot go, and gave me permission to stop the messenger on his return and open the letter. This man, an Arab, had come from Khartoum in only five days, had stopped but two hours at Labeyed, and then gone on. The Governor accordingly sent for the Sheikh of the Arabs, with whom I arranged for seven dromedaries to take us there, our party consisting now only of Churi and myself. It would have required four days to reach the western frontier of Kordofan, and eight or ten to cross a desert that separates the two countries. But sickness put an end to all this. The very first day Churi was seized with fever and ague, and became rapidly





worse, and the third morning, after much previous suffering, I was also attacked with the same complaint. The sickness this year was unusually severe in consequence of the heavy rains: I was assured there was not a single person in Labeyed who had escaped, and the Governor told me that a fortnight before my arrival, out of sixty servants of his household, there was not one who was able to bring him a glass of water. It was not till the 26th of November that I was able to move out of the house, and I then found my poor friend Churi very ill, and apparently in a dying state. No time was to be lost, so I asked him to make an effort, and next day we left Labeyed, and after eleven days' most painful march, on which I will no longer dwell, we arrived safely at Khartoum. During my illness I received great kindness and attention from the Governor, who, although very ill himself, sat every day for hours by my side, watching me with the greatest anxiety, and bathing my forehead with vinegar. His name is "Abd El Kader," the powerful servant (of God), but he is far too good and amiable to govern this wild country of Kordofan.



Labeyed, the capital, stands in a vast plain, and is a straggling collection of mud huts with thatched cone roofs. It has to be rebuilt almost every year after the rainy season. As soon as night sets in, there is a furious howling of wild beasts, leopards and hyænas all round, who are kept off by strong abattis of thorns, behind which the dogs yell them defiance. Water sometimes is very scarce, and the wells are nearly a hundred feet deep; it is extremely unwholesome. Every evening towards sunset, heavy banks of vapour formed on the ground, rolling off again with the morning sun in the same dense mass of cloud. The trade of Kordofan is chiefly in gum-arabic, which exudes from the sond trees, and is collected at certain seasons of the year. Slaves also are bought and captured in the neighbourhood.

I will copy an extract from my note-book on these unhappy creatures. "Monday morning, Nov. 10. 1851.—Scene opposite my windows, which look into the Government courtyard. Five male slaves just arrived, their necks in a wooden triangle at the end of a long


heavy pole, which on the march was of course attached to a camel: one female slave bound by the feet. I believe the number of slaves brought every year to Khartoum and Labeyed, and thence sent into Egypt, is very great. Some are also sent from Darfoor to Sioot. I have just ascertained that these few were caught by the Arabs in some mountains to the southward. In the afternoon these slaves were stripped, examined, made to walk,—in fact, critically examined like beasts,—in the same Government court-yard. And how did they behave—like beasts? I watched them closely, unseen, and cannot conceive how men could have behaved with more propriety, or shown more touching dignity. There was no fear, nor was there any momentary pride of the man to show his muscular figure: they held themselves mechanically, let others bend their limbs, and marched no further than the very line. When finished, they wrapped their scanty clothing with decency round their waist, and took no notice of the flowing robe, the gorgeous turban of their masters. As men physically they were their superior, in heart and feeling it is mockery to make comparison, in courage



unquestionably not inferior; but they have no self-reliance or moral strength, and in the onward march of the world, from the position of their country and its climate, have been left behind.

Kordofan on its conquest by the Egyptians some thirty years ago, was a rich and populous negro country; it is now quite the reverse; the excesses of the troops and exactions of the Government have ruined it. A large body of soldiers are kept at this frontier outpost of the Egyptian territories to awe the adjacent negro countries. They are drilled into tolerably good machines, and march out every morning, colours flying, drums tattooing, to perform exactly the same manœuvres. But this cramping of the body and mind is not the best system for warfare with savages, and only a few months back they learnt a terrible lesson. There are some mountains three days' journey to the southward, inhabited by a race of negroes, whom the Turks please to call "Abeed" or slaves, but who are no more slaves than I am, except in prospect. They are fair game to be hunted and kidnapped.

On the conquest of the country they agreed to pay an annual tribute of slaves, but latterly became remiss. Their chief is a negro, fifty years of age and of resolute courage, who has been surnamed by the people "Nasr" or Victory. He lived a long time at Khartoum, speaks Arabic, and knows the real weakness of the Egyptians. The Government cajoled him under the most solemn promises to come to Khartoum; he was clapped into prison, but escaped after a long confinement. On returning to his countrymen he vowed vengeance, and flatly refused to pay the tribute. This occurred about eight months back. Letters were sent to him of menace and pardon alternately, he tore them all up alike in face of the messengers and said he would hang the next. Twelve hundred troops were then marched against him, but their operations were badly conducted. They got entangled in the mountains, and were fighting against savage negroes who were quite naked, armed only with a long spear, and who could clear the bush like antelopes. The men fired so badly that the negroes lost their instinctive dread of fire-arms, closed on them with the spear, and



put two hundred to death. The rest made a very ignominious retreat and were only saved from further slaughter by the good conduct of some Turkish cavalry. So matters remain in *statu quo* ; for though the season for military operations has again commenced, there seems no desire to try it again, and the Turks, waiting for a better opportunity, have sent him at present a full pardon. The spirit of the men who conquered these countries, the sagacity of Mohammed Ali and the sword of Ibrahim, have passed away ; luxury and the harcem emasculate their successors. The strength of the Government in these provinces rests on little more than the fear of its cruelty and the thunder of its bluster. It has been very wise in never allowing the introduction of fire-arms or sale of gunpowder.

As Labeyed was the termination of my travels, I will here give the height of the principal points in the journey above the level of the sea, as given by my aneroid observations. I paid great attention to them, but of course their result will be received with caution and as only approximate : —

Labeyed, which is in latitude	13° 11' N.	= 1950 feet.
Khartoum	„ 15° 37'	= 1286
Barbar	„ 17° 59'	= 1160
Abou Hamed (not observed)		1110
Highest plain of Nubian Desert		1500
Korusko	„ 22° 36'	= 400
Assouan		320

Variation of compass at Khartoum 8° 30' westerly.

Both at Khartoum and Kordofan I observed there was a daily rise and fall of the aneroid of from one to two tenths of an inch, so regular as to enable one to tell roughly the time of day. The Governor told me that the highest he had ever seen the thermometer in his room, and of course it is the coolest place, was 102°; and I believe his remark to be true, that though the sun is hotter here than in Egypt, the shade is cooler.

During my long stay at Labeyed the Arab who had been sent with the letter to Darfoor, never came back. Either some accident must have happened to him, or the suspicions of the black were roused, and it was thought more prudent to refuse an answer.

CHAPTER VII

THE RETURN.

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THE RETURN.


ON our return we took a different line of road, one more to the northward, and remained for two days at an Arab encampment half way. Churi was here very ill, quite unable to move, and I never thought could have survived. We were among the Kababeesh Arabs, a savage set, and there was great excitement in their tents, for they were at war with three other more powerful tribes. The warfare of the Arab is very cruel; he waylays his enemy, or creeps upon a village at night, and puts every one to the sword. Some of these people go to war with chain armour, and thick quilted coverings for their dromedaries, and their arms are a long narrow shield, with a quiver of spears.

All that I have seen of the Arabs has made me form a very bad opinion of them: there is little elevating in their character, and they are


essentially avaricious. Hospitality is their redeeming feature: it is a law universally acknowledged, and accorded without stint or afterthought to any traveller. Neglecting, and perhaps ignorant themselves of many religious rites, they yet preserve a deep respect for religion, and are not intolerant to others, like the blind bigots of more civilised countries. Through this respect for the Mahomedan religion, and their unhesitating hospitality, negroes from the most distant regions of Africa, accompanied by their wives and children, travel afoot on their pilgrimage to Mecca, without fear and without any money, whilst their pagan countrymen are being hunted and sold into slavery around them. Hadjee, or pilgrim, is a title that gives them sure protection. The road these people take is to Souwakin, a port on the Red Sea, about ten days' journey from the Nile, where they embark and go almost direct across to Mecca. It is a stream of human beings, constantly flowing and constantly increasing, for while the Mahomedan religion seems fading in the East, it is making astonishing progress through the negro nations. We little know with what

fiery zeal the missionaries of this religion are propagating their faith ; already it extends in an unbroken line from the Red Sea to the Atlantic, and wherever it comes, it falls as a blight on the country, turning the warm heart of the negro into selfishness and suspicion, and forming the most dangerous barrier to the daring enterprise of travellers.

From this encampment we pushed straight across a flat desert covered with dry thorns and gum-arabic trees, in which were many camels grazing. We met once at a hollow, where some water still remained from the rains, 2000 camels, all together, admirably organised into troops, and attended by only a few Arabs. On another occasion, we passed some camels grazing at such a distance from the Nile, that I asked the Arab attending, where they went to drink ? He said, he marches them all down together to the Nile, and they drink every eleventh day. It is now the cool season, and the heat is tempered by fresh northerly breezes. The Arab, of course, brings water-skins for his own supply. All these camels were breeding stock. They live on thorns and the top shoots of the gum-




arabic tree, although it is armed with the most frightful spikes. But very little comes amiss to the camel; he will eat dry wood to keep up digestion if in want of a substitute. Instinct or experience has taught him to avoid the only two tempting-looking plants that grow in the desert, — the green eusha bush, which is full of milk-coloured juice, and a creeper, that grows in the sand where nothing else will grow, and which has a bitter fruit like a melon. I was surprised to learn that the leopard does not dare to attack the camel, whose tall and narrow flanks would seem to be fatally exposed to such a supple enemy. Nature, however, has given him a means of defence in his iron jaw and long powerful neck, which are a full equivalent for his want of agility. He can also strike heavily with his feet, and his roar would intimidate many foes. I never felt tired of admiring this noble creature, and through the monotony of the desert would watch for hours his ceaseless tread and unerring path. Carrying his head low forward, and surveying every thing with his black brilliant eye, he marches resolutely forward, and quickens his pace at the slightest



cheer of the rider. He is too intelligent and docile for a bridle; besides, he lives on the march, and with a sudden sweep of the neck will seize, without stopping, the smallest straw. When the day's march is over, he passes the night in looking for food, with scarcely an hour to repose his limbs, and less than that for sleep. He closes the eye fitfully, the smallest noise will awake him. When lying down for rest, every part of the body is supported; his neck and head lie lightly along the sand, a broad plate of bone under the breast takes the weight of his deep chest, and his long legs lay folded under him, supporting his sides like a ship in a cradle.

This desert was full of game and a great variety of deer; I could not shoot them however, for the locks of my fowling-piece were injured. The springs had become too weak to ignite the cap; I suppose it came from the intense heat of the sand in which the gun-case used to lay in the noonday halt. It will be remembered, I found the sand one day to be 140° , and I have no doubt on many occasions it was hotter. And yet this fowling-piece was one of the best that could be made. Not con-




sidering myself a good marksman, I preferred a double-barrelled gun as a means of defence, to a rifle. I was quite in love with this desert, and felt enjoying a new lease of life after my late illness; for every day, though living on the scantiest food and filthy water, brought increasing strength to my weakened frame. Riding a swift dromedary, I went scouring the country to the right and left of the line of march in search of camel's milk, but on one of these occasions, Churi, who was with the baggage, met a savage Arab, who, seeing his helpless condition, without the slightest provocation, knelt down his dromedary, and was just going to kill him with his spear, when the two Arabs attending rushed up and saved him.

On arriving at Khartoum, Churi's health rapidly improved, but it was evident he was quite unable to stand an African climate. I had also myself wonderfully recovered since leaving Kordofan, but felt unwilling to go back and travel alone amongst the negroes, unattended as I now was by even a native servant. The ague had robbed me of the pride of physical strength, and would have in-

stantly returned in Kordofan, and some weeks of the finest season for travelling had now slipped away. I therefore decided to return to Europe. I had also a painful longing to speak my native language with a countryman, and drown the hardships of travelling by laughter in the exchange of mutual feelings and ideas.



As all the boats of the place had gone on an annual slave-hunting expedition up the White Nile, the Pacha, in the kindest manner, gave me his own to take us to Barbar. The weather had now completely changed ; it blew strong cold winds from the northward, against which our boat, though aided by the current, often made little progress, and the men complained bitterly of their sufferings. The river had fallen considerably, and its numerous sandbanks were occupied by crocodiles and a great variety of water-fowl. This cold season lasts four months, a season of health and enjoyment ; the heat and the rains then set in, and both at their commencement and conclusion produce those terrible fevers and agues that are so fatal even to the natives.

On arriving at Barbar, being anxious to relieve my friends from any anxiety, I made in-




stant arrangements for departure, and came on alone, with one Arab for a guide. We both rode dromedaries, and took nothing with us but some coffee, a bag of bread, and a water-bottle. We went nearly night and day, arriving at Aboo Hamed at noon of the third day, and having purchased two waterskins and the carcass of a sheep for crossing the Nubian Desert, pushed on again at midnight, and arrived at Korusko at sunset of the fifth day from Aboo Hamed, or in eight from Barbar. Our speed was very great, and we stopped only an hour in the morning and evening for meals, rode on till one or two o'clock in the night, and were away again by five in the morning. The cold during the night was very severe.

On arriving at Korusko, I rode my camel straight down to the bank of the river, and there parted with the noble creature that had carried me so swiftly and so gallantly, and, giving him a large feed of corn, stept at once on board a boat that was laying alongside. In five minutes a bargain was struck, we shoved off into the stream, and were on our way to Egypt. I was hampered with no lug-



gage, having nothing but the light dress I stood in ; a cloak, a camel's saddle, and the last remnant of my sheep. Making a dinner off this, I then lay down and enjoyed a happy sleep so long as the boatmen were singing their Nubian songs, and the oars kept splashing in the water.

On arriving at Assouan, I saw an English flag flying at a boat's masthead, and stepping at once on board, was met in the kindest manner by a party of my countrymen, Mr. Ottley and Gordon and two others, with whom I remained the day. The next morning I left in a little fast-pulling sandal for Cairo, where I arrived in ten days, and hearing of the events in France, hurried on direct to England, in the hope of employment on active service.



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CHAPTER VIII.

THE BIVOUAC.

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THE BIVOUAC.

AND now, whilst sitting by a bivouac fire, I will relate a few incidents of the journey.

On the way from Barbar we had been travelling since the morning with no food, but our hard stale bread, a village that we had reckoned upon for an evening meal having been entirely deserted, and it was now about nine o'clock: when I asked the Arab if there was no place where we could possibly find a supper, he said we were just abreast of a place where he remembered there were a few houses, but most likely all deserted. I told him to strike in; and turning our dromedaries towards the river, we entered among enormous sand hills broken into heaps like a tumultuous sea. We then came among palm trees half buried in sand, and below was the broad stream of the Nile rushing over a rocky bed. Soon after we saw the flickering of a light

and the barking of a dog announced our approach. I went up at once on foot to the hut, and there found a poor creature trembling with fear. I told her I was no Turk but a Christian, and wanted some food, which I would pay for. The Arab then runs up, at which the poor creature, trembling with fear, cried out, "I am a wretched helpless woman, but dressed in these man's clothes when I heard you approaching." We soon quieted all her fears and sat down by the fire, for the night was very cold; and shared with her some beans which she happened to be boiling for her supper. A few handfuls were all her store, and these had been given to her in charity by a passing caravan. She was an old negress who had once been a slave, and said that the place was entirely deserted, and she left alone without any support. We then left her quite overcome with thankfulness at the present of some money that I gave her, with which she will be able to purchase food from the caravans; and winding through the sand hills that half-buried her little hut, rejoined the track of the desert. It seemed as if Providence had sent me to that lone house to visit the poor crea-



ture at a moment of blank despair. Refreshed with our little supper we went on all night, arriving at Gageh at three in the morning.

On coming out from the sand hills I gave my Arab, for the first time, a few words of approval and confidence in him as a guide. He rode up close alongside, and said, in the prettiest manner, "I am so pleased, and don't you ever speak harshly to me, for I feel it, and I would do anything for you, — I would lick the sand off your shoes." My point was gained, the wild child of the desert was subdued, so I replied, "All right, we shall now go on very smoothly." Although his knowledge of locality was so good, the ignorance he displayed on another occasion was astonishing. It was in the Nubian Desert, at night, coming out of a black defile of rocks upon a vast plain of sand, where the only guide were the stars. Observing our course was very irregular, I asked him what he was steering by. He replied, "by the North star or the star of the Kid (as it is called in Arabic), for is not that it ahead?" he asked with hesitation. I said, "What! not know the North star! you are a long way out;"

and pointing to where it really was, we altered course accordingly. This Arab was one of the best, and as long as he was in my presence was personally attached to me. I can scarcely say more for any Arab, but I will now show a trait in his character common to all his race. It was in the evening, during our few hours' stay at Aboo Hamed. I had ordered two sacks of corn for our camels, and anxious that the gallant creatures should have plenty of food to sustain their great exertions, told the Arab he must fill them in my presence. Accordingly his garment was spread on the ground to receive the heap from which he measured the grain with most honourable precision. The first sack was filled and secured, but there was some delay about the second. In about an hour, however, it was brought in already filled and tied up: I asked the Arab what it was; he replied, "Oh! it is the other sack just the same as the first." I said, "Of course there is no doubt of that, but I told you to measure it out before me, and you must do it." He tried in vain to evade it, so at last the sack was opened among a crowd of bystanders, the contents poured out, and he began remeasuring. A wink, however,




had been given to one of the people, who returns in about the middle of the very slow operation, and without the remark of any one, and certainly not from me, pours an apron full of corn into the heap. The sack is filled and a few handfuls remain. "A little over," cried the Arab with an air of offended honour; which was responded to by the crowd, and affirmed by me. So all parties being satisfied, I said to the Arab, "Good! I want those sacks for a pillow." This consciousness that there is scarcely an honest man in the country takes away much of the pleasure in travelling. It is not that there is any fear of theft; I would leave my things exposed, and no one of the bystanders would steal them, but they are always trying to overreach, and put an inordinate value upon the merit of the most trifling civility. "Backsheesh" is the unceasing demand, and it is caught up by the youngest children or newest strangers. One day, walking along the river, I heard a man crying out "Bashkeek! Bashkeek!" and on looking up, found it came from a nigger who was at the top of a palm tree. I professed my ignorance of the word, but said I knew the meaning of

Backsheesh. Daylight broke upon his intellect, and he screamed "Backsheesh, Backsheesh," but the laugh being against him, we moved on.

An accident occurred to us the first night after leaving Aboo Hamed, which, had it been in the hot season, would have caused great privation, and shows the risk that must often attend the lonely traveller. Having started in the night, we had travelled on without any intermission, except an hour in the morning and evening, until one o'clock in the following night. It was bitterly cold, and we crept for shelter under the lee of a rock that lay detached on the sandy plain, our saddles and waterskins beside us, and the two dromedaries resting alongside. In the morning before daybreak we were away, but on placing the saddles we found one of our two waterskins perfectly empty. Some little creature that burrows in the ground had gnawed it in several places, but providentially had never touched the other, though they were both lying together on the sand. In consequence of this accident we ran short of water, and the last day's journey came upon


us without a drop for breakfast. The last dregs of the skin, which the Arab offered me, were so filthy that I threw them away, and telling him not to talk on the subject, we pushed resolutely on. Soon after I observed a caravan approaching, and the Arab was so struck with superstition, he could hardly believe its evidence. He cried out, "I'll take it by force, I'll take it by force." "Take what by force?" I replied, "you shall use soft words first." On coming up, they kindly gave us a drink and sufficient water for the day, and at sunset that evening we reached the Nile.

My Arab's dromedary had become footsore when little more than half way through the desert, and he wanted to leave it behind, riding alternately on mine. He proposed this at a place by some hills where a few gum-arabic trees were growing, whose roots perhaps find a little moisture deep down under the sand. I told him it was a cruel proposal, to which I could not accede, and that we would slacken our pace for the poor creature. In speaking to him afterwards about this, he said that in that cold weather the camel could exist, living only on the tender shoots from




the branches, for three months, without dying of thirst. There were some timid gazelles flying over the plain at the time, which, he said, were often observed here, and which knew of water somewhere in the black mass of mountains, but the Arabs had never been able to discover the place.

The caravan that gave us a drink of water belonged to a young merchant, a cross between an European and Egyptian, a result little favourable to his personal appearance. He was riding a fine dromedary with a superb saddle, like a bad jewel richly set, and on learning that we had come from Barbar so rapidly, pointed to his camel with an air of intense satisfaction, and said he had done it in five days. "Indeed!" I replied; "and who was the rider?" "A eunuch of the Pacha," he said, at which I laughed heartily, and swore, if so, I would do it in four. Yes, he knew it for a fact, for it was on account of the feat he had purchased the animal. I asked him if he thought that the best plan for a traveller, to which a young Frenchman accompanying him replied, with characteristic decision upon trifles — "Mais oui — sans doute." Of course



there was no argument after that, so I merely asked if they carried the corn and fed the camels themselves. "Oh no! their servants did that;" to which my own experience would conclude that of all the camels of the caravan their own must fare the worst. We parted from them, myself a little put out about the five days' time, and the first moment the Arab dropped astern, I turned angrily, and told him he was always behind, and that any one could come in eight days. "Who can?" he said, pained at the remark. "Why any one; it has been done in five days." "No, Wallāhee," he said, "it never was; a camel, many years back, did it in six days, and died before drinking. It was the Sheikh of the tribe who rode it." "No," I said, "the camel that the young merchant was riding did it in five days." All his spirits instantly returned; he laughed and blew his fingers, an act representing more than the words themselves, the fact of its being bosh, humbug, gammon. Seeing the drift, I said drily, "Yes he did, and a eunuch rode him." He roared with laughter. I said, "It's a fact, and he bought him in consequence." At this my Arab lost all control, and laughed



with convulsions. "It is one of our Arab tricks," he cried, "it's one of our shameful tricks." And so with a good joke at the Frenchman, and his friend the eunuch, we rode merrily along the rest of the day.

I carried with me some vinegar in case of a return of fever, and mixing a little of it with the dirty water to make it less unpalatable, asked the Arab if he would like to taste it. He looked at me very archly, and said, "You should not ask me, it is against the Prophet, and yet I can't refuse, but I never touch those things." I replied, "Nonsense, this is vinegar, not wine; it is no heating liquor, but produces quite a contrary effect." With much difficulty he overcame his scruples, and drank it; but so strong was the conviction on his mind of its being an intoxicating liquor, having never heard of vinegar, that he stroked himself down complacently, and said, "How good!" Next day I offered him some more; he winked his eyes, and said, "It's very wrong, but it's your fault, you know I can't refuse; you taught me." He objected this time to my putting any water to it, and tossed off so much that it gave a twist to his inside,

and yet stroking himself down, he cried, "How good, how good," and for the next two or three hours was under the firm impression of being intoxicated.

In coming down the Nile, I found sitting in a boat so intolerably dull after the charm of activity, that I walked on shore always during the day, whilst the boat went gliding down the stream, and the men would be resting from their exertions at night. As none of them ever accompanied me on these excursions, it was a good opportunity for judging the character of the people, and I cannot remember a single occasion where the slightest insult was offered, or where I could even detect a sign of malevolence which was not instantly disarmed by a courteous or sarcastic word. And yet my costume was one which in general opinion is not the best fitted to conciliate prejudices. I never would wear the slightest disguise, or even any part of the handsome Mahommedan dress, but wore a high broad-brimmed beaver hat with a cover that hung down over the shoulders, white flannel jacket and trowsers, with strong half-boots. A short sword with steel scabbard,

and a little pistol, were my constant weapons of defence for serious enemies, and a heavy hide whip had a salutary warning for dogs and boys. Besides this I also carried a white double-lined umbrella to protect me against the burning sun, and which also served at night as a tent to my head, when sleeping on the ground, and I used also to fold three or four white handkerchiefs round the hat to protect the temples. Although "may you wear a hat" is a bitter curse from the angry lips of a Mahommedan, this head dress, to those who had never seen the Frank costume, was an object of much curiosity and praise, and pronounced by the Arabs as being far better than the oppressive turban.

The boat that I hired at Assouan to take me to Cairo, belonged to the Kadi, whom I found sitting in court, dressed in a scarlet cloak administering justice. I was not aware at the time that the boat belonged to him, and there being some dispute about the price, the party with whom I was bargaining appealed to the judge to decide. With consummate effrontery he gave it in favour of himself, but we agreed at last to two-thirds of the original

sum. Not content with his bargain, for I now found out it was with him I was dealing, he tried to reduce the number of men to which the boat was fairly entitled. This difficulty was got over by mutual concession, the agreement was signed, and the boat to be ready by sunset. Sunset came, but there were only four men for the crew, instead of six as by the contract. I told the Rais to make haste and get the others, for I was anxious to start. The night, however, wore on, without their coming, for the Rais evidently thought I should be too impatient to wait. Losing my temper at the evasion, I was going to wreak my vengeance on them, and not on the Kadi, so they all ran, leaving me unprofitable possession of the sandal. As soon as ever daylight came I mounted a donkey, and rode off to the Governor to complain; but on passing through the bazaar, whom should I meet but my friend the Kadi, sitting at a coffee shop smoking an early pipe. I pulled up, and said, "The boat was not ready last night, and I am now going to the Governor to see whether you or I are the greater." He said, 'The boat will be ready by and by; you could have gone last

night, four men are enough." At this I burst into a rage, and with no want of words to express it, for on these occasions I speak Arabic with great fluency and precision. "Oh! you oppressor of the people," I cried, "you corruption, you swine, there's no grace of God in your face." He stood fire very well till I said this, and then stamped and raved, and it was doubtful who would win, so I appealed to the bystanders, and said, "Look at him, there's no grace of God in his face." It was too much for him, so he bolted and ran down to the beach, and cried, "Get the men, get the boat ready; this fellow is worse than the Devil." I then rode on to the Governor, for whose wisdom I felt profound reverence, for I found him in the stable feeding his own horses, well knowing that otherwise they would be starved. Shutting the door, with a sly look at the ostler, he then came out, and said, "What! Not gone yet!" I told him all that had passed, which he enjoyed amazingly, and we then went together to the divan, and sent for the Kadi. He came in about half an hour with a heavy unmeaning face, and whispered to the Governor, who then said, "Your boat

is quite ready, and I am sorry for the delay." I thanked him, and said, "Perhaps the Kadi wishes to speak." "No; I have nothing to say," he hastily interposed; to which I replied, "Then surely I'm content."

I had heard a good deal about this fellow, of his avarice and extortion; and on leaving the court was followed by a large concourse of people, all highly amused at the occurrence. "Wallah," they cried, "he is a great man; he is greater than the Kadi."



CONCLUSION.

1

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ON arriving at Boulac, the port of Cairo, I galloped off to the British Hotel, and there found the last party of Indian passengers just starting for Suez, whilst those for England had already left. But though disappointed in not saving the mail, all turned out for the best, for I left soon after with Mr. Stephenson, in his beautiful yacht *Titania*, for Malta and Marseilles.

Habit is so powerful, that though I had landed only a few months back in despair at passing from the changing scenes of European politics into the deathlike stillness of Eastern ideas, the charm of travelling had stolen upon me, and with a feeling of reluctance, I left the dry air and reckless life of the desert for the murky climate and wordy warfare of England.



1

METEOROLOGICAL JOURNAL.

TABLE OF OBSERVATIONS

WITH THE

ANEROID BAROMETER AND THERMOMETER.

September 11th, 1851.—Northerly winds.

Cairo Hotel, second floor.

2. 30. p. m. A. 29.758. T. 96°.

Sept. 12th.—In boat on Nile. Strong north winds.

8. a. m. abreast of Horm El Keddeh.

A. 29.918. T. 80°. Water of Nile 79°.

Noon; six miles above Mayoan.

A. 29.868. T. 80°. Water 79°.

Sept. 13th.—On Nile. Strong north breezes.

8. a. m. abreast of Gebel Sheikh Embarek.

A. 29.927. T. 73°. Water 75.6°.

Noon; abreast of Balad Mohammad.

A. 29.912. T. 77°. Water 77°.

6. p. m. abreast of Kom Achmar.

A. 29.848. T. 81°.

Sept. 14th.—On Nile. Strong northerly gales.

5. a. m. abreast of Mallawee.

A. 29.858. T. 70°. Water 75°.

8. a. m. abreast of El Mandara.

A. 29·870. T. 73°. Water 75°.

Noon; abreast of Manfaloot. Light north breezes.

A. 29·825. T. 80°. Water 77°.

6. p. m. near Sioot. Strong gale from north.

A. 29·780. T. 82°. Water 76°.

Sept. 15th.—On Nile. Strong gales.

5. 20. a. m. in latitude 27°.

A. 29·792. T. 72°. Water 74°.

8. a. m. abreast of Gom El Kabeer.

A. 29·835. T. 74°. Water 75°.

Noon; abreast of Rahenay. Gebel Hereedee.

A. 29·778. T. 77°. Water 76°.

6. p. m. five miles above Ekh-mim. Fresh north breeze.

A. 29·665. T. 82°. Water 77°.

Sept. 16th.—On Nile. Strong north breezes.

5. 20. a. m. six miles above Girgeh.

A. 29·680. T. 75°. Water 76°.

8. a. m. twenty miles above Girgeh.

A. 29·730. T. 75°. Water 76°.

Noon; abreast of Gebel Farshoot.

A. 29·675. T. 78°. Water 77°.

6. p. m. near Dendera. Light north winds.

A. 29·580. T. 85°. Water 78°.

Sept. 17th.—On Nile. Calms. Observe the Nile to begin decreasing.

5. 20. a. m. at Keneh. Light wind.

A. 29·605. T. 78°. Water 76°.

8. a.m. at Keneh. Calm.

A. 29-668. T. 81°. Water 76·5°.

Noon ; five miles above Keneh. Calm.

A. 29-620. T. 85·5°. Water 78°.

4 p.m. near Ballas. Calm weather.

A. 29-570. T. 90°. Water 81°.

6. p.m. four miles above Ballas. Light north wind.

A. 29-580. T. 89°. Water 77.

Sept. 18th. — On Nile. Calm all night.

5. 45. same place nearly. Calm.

A. 29-655. T. 81°. Water 77°.

8. a.m. near Ghoust. Calm.

A. 29-695. T. 83°. Water 79°.

Noon ; four miles above Ghoust. Calm.

A. 29-655. T. 86°. Water 79·5°.

6. p.m. between Hagazeh and Thebes. Light airs.

A. 29-555. T. 87°. Water 79°.

Sept. 19th. — On Nile. Calm weather.

5. 30. a.m. near Luxor. Light north winds.

A. 29-650. T. 81°. Water 77·5.

8. a.m. abreast of Karnac. Calm.

A. 29-700. T. 84°. Water 79°.

Noon ; three miles above Karnac. Calm.

A. 29-652. T. 89°. Water 82°.

3. 45. p.m. six miles above Karnac. Calm.

A. 29-571. T. 93°. Water only 80°.

6 p.m. near Ernannt. Light north winds.

A. 29-580. T. 91°. Water 79°.

Sept. 20th.—On Nile. Light and calm winds.

5. 30. a.m. six miles above Ernannt.

A. 29·700. T. 81°. Water 79°.

8. a.m. abreast of the Gebelein.

A. 29·731. T. 83°. Water 78°.

Noon ; between Asfoon and Esneh. Light winds.

A. 29·730. T. 88°. Water 79°.

6. p.m. three miles above Esneh.

A. 29·650. T. 90°. Water 80°.

Sept. 21st.—On Nile. Light north winds.

5. 20. a.m. near Edfoo.

A. 29·685. T. 78°. Water 78°.

8. a.m. three miles above last position.

A. 29·720. T. 80°. Water 78°.

Noon ; two miles above Edfoo. Calm.

A. 29·708. T. 92°. Water 80°.

6. p.m. six miles above Edfoo. Light north winds.

A. 29·638. T. 90°. Water 80°.

Sept. 22d.—On Nile. Light north breezes.

5. 20. a.m. abreast of Resras.

A. 29·690. T. 79°. Water 77°.

8. a.m. abreast of Kom Ombos.

A. 29·730. T. 82°. Water 78°.

Noon ; abreast of Naya

A. 29·672. T. 93°. Water 79·5°.

6. p.m. two miles below Assouan.

A. 29·590. T. 92°. Water 80.

Sept. 23d.—On Nile. Calm weather.

6. a.m. at landing-place Assouan.

A. 29-670. T. 81°.

Noon ; four miles above Philæ, Nubia.

A. 29-635. T. 90°. Water 81°.

3. 20. p.m. abreast of Dabod.

A. 29-550. T. 100°. Water 82°.

6. p.m. abreast of Dehmîr.

A. 29-538. T. 94°. Water 82°.

Sept. 24th. — On Nile. Light and calm weather.

5. 30. a.m. four miles below Tafa.

A. 29-620. T. 88°. Water 82°.

Noon ; in the Bab El Kalabsheh.

A. 29-575. T. 98°. Water 82°.

3. p.m. same place. Strong hot south wind.

A. 29-535. T. 100°. Water 82°.

6. p.m. same place. Light airs from the north.

A. 29-515. T. 97°. Water 82°.

Sept. 25th. — On Nile. The atmosphere was very much agitated during the night ; the sun passing the equator. It blew with a hot wind from the south, with lightning and a few drops of rain, changing suddenly into hard squalls from the northward.

5. 30. a.m. abreast of Kalabsheh.

A. 29-565. T. 86°. Water 75°.

8. a.m. abreast of Aboo Hor.

A. 29-620. T. 88°. Water 81°.

Noon ; three miles above last position.

A. 29-570. T. 97°. Water 83°.

6. p.m. near Marieh.

A. 29·485. T. 99°. Water 82°.

Sept. 26th.—On Nile. Moderate breeze from north.

5. 30. a.m. eight miles below Wady Sabooa.

A. 29·574. T. 83°. Water 81°.

8. a.m. three miles below.

A. 29·630. T. 87°. Water 81°.

Noon ; one mile above Wady Sabooa.

A. 29·572. T. 98°. Water 82°.

P.m. The thermometer steady as usual at 100°. from soon after noon to a little before sunset, and the temperature of the Nile never exceeding 83°.

6. p.m. six miles above noon position.

A. 29·500. T. 98°. Water 83°.

Sept. 27th.—On Nile. Calm weather.

5. 20. a.m. same place. Calm.

A. 29·690. T. 83°. Water 81°.

Water in earthen porous jar after night's evaporation, 66°.

8. a.m. near Gebel Saba Barmat.

A. 29·645. T. 87°. Water 81°.

Noon ; arrived at Korusko. Light north wind.

A. 29·575. T. 95° Water 83°.

Sept. 28th.—On Nile at Korusko.

5. 20. a.m. A. 29·540. T. 77°. Water 81°.

Water in earthen jar after night's evaporation, 66°.

Noon ; same place. A. 29·53.

Started to cross the Desert at 1. p.m.

Sept. 29th.—In Nubian Desert.

8. 30. a.m. A. 28·840.

11. a.m. A. 28·825. T., under the shade of a deep rock, and suspended apart from the side, 106°.

Noon; same place. A. 28·81. T. 108°.

Cloudless sky. Moderate breeze from south-east. Very oppressive. Lowest measure of day's march 28·25. It was late in the afternoon.

Sept. 30th.—5. 15. a.m. in vast sandy plain.

A. 28·50. T. 68°.

10. 30. a.m. in middle of a cavern.

A. 28·30. T. 102°.

Noon; same place. A. 28·280. T. 106°.

October 1st.—Nubian Desert.

5. 30. a.m. A. 28·41. T. 76°.

Noon; A. 28·461. T. 103°.

Heat of the sand 140°.

Water in earthen jar 69°.

Thermometer, eight feet from the ground, and in the full sunshine, 109°.

Oct. 2d.—At wells of Mourad in desert.

5. 45. a.m. A. 28·64. T. 70°.

Noon; A. 28·637. T. 102°.

Oct. 3d.—5. 10. a.m. A. 28·62. T. 77°.

Noon; A. 28·60. T. 105°.

Oct. 4th.—On vast sandy plain.

5. 15. a.m. A. 28·618. T. 72°.

Noon; A. 28·628. T. 110°.

8. p.m. A. 28·600. T. 82°.

Oct. 5th.—At Abou Hamed on bank of Nile.

5. 30. a.m. A. 28·730. T. 69°.

Noon; A. 28·733. T. 104°. Water of Nile 81°.

5. 40. p.m. A. 28·670. Water 81°.

Oct. 6th.—At Abou Hamed. Fresh south breezes.

6. a.m. A. 28·760. T. 74°. Water 81°.

Noon; A. 28·768. T. 103°. Water 81°.

6. 30. p.m. A. 28·71. T. 95°. Water 81°.

Oct. 7th.—Left Abou Hamed at ten o'clock.

5. a.m. A. 28·81. T. 72°.

Strong south-east winds, very hot on the march.

6. 15. p.m. A. 28·735.

Oct. 8th.—In desert.

5. a.m. A. 28·828. T. 65°.

8. a.m. at Balad Gageh. A. 28·888. T. 83°.

Pleasant breeze from southward.

Noon; same place. A. 28·80. T. 100°.

Oct. 9th.—6. a.m. A. 28·71. T. 78°.

Noon; A. 28·733. T. 100°.

2. p.m. A. 28·675. T. 102°.

Oct. 10th.—5. 30. a.m. 28·700. T. 77°.

Noon; at Kenaniet. 28·70. T. 95°.

2. p.m. same place in the dark room of a house 28·654

T. 97°.



Oct. 11th.—At Barbar.

5. 30. a.m. A. 28·706. T. 73°.

Noon; A. 28·730. T. 95. Water of Nile 82°.

5. 45. p.m. A. 28·684. T. 95. Water of Nile 82°.

Oct. 12th.—Sailed from Barbar at 7. a.m.

5. 30. a.m. A. 28·740. T. 71°. Water 81·5.

Water in earthen jar after night's evaporation 61·5.

Noon; on Nile, ten miles above Barbar.

A. 28·725. T. 93° at 4. p.m. 28·670. T. 97°.

Oct. 13th.—On Nile. Light north breezes.

5. 45. a.m. A. 28·697. T. 76. Water 80°.

Water in earthen jar 64°.

Noon; at junction of River Atbara.

A. 28·662. T. 92°. Water of Nile 82°.

Oct. 14th.—On Nile. Steady north-east breezes.

5. 40. a.m. near Zaidall.

A. 28·645. T. 76°. Water 80°.

Noon; near Gebel Agehdeh.

A. 28·645. T. 93°. Water 82°.

6. 15. p.m. abreast of Kateyab.

A. 28·60. T. 92°. Water 81°.

Oct. 15th.—On Nile. Northerly breezes.

5. 45. a.m. six miles above Kateyab.

A. 28·724. T. 74°. Water 78°.

Noon; at Kaboosheyr.

A. 28·70. T. 88°. Water 81°.

5. 45. p.m. five miles below Shendy.

A. 28·642. T. 87°. Water 79°.

Oct. 16th.—On Nile. Light north winds.

5. 45. a.m. at Shendy.

A. 28·775. T. 69°. Water 77°.

Noon; six miles above Shendy.

A. 28·750. T. 86°. Water 78°.

6. p.m. at bend of river to the west.

A. 28·676. T. 81°. Water 78°.

Oct. 17th.—On Nile. Calm.

5. 45. a.m. A. 28·742. T. 68°. Water 75°.

Noon; abreast of village Nasrey.

A. 28·71. T. 90°. Water 78°.

Measured the fall of the Nile at the Gebel Dabah or Hyæna Rock this afternoon, and found it had fallen eighty-three inches. The place was extremely favourable.

5. 45. p.m. A. 28·668. T. 83°. Water 78°.

Oct. 18th.—On Nile. Calm.

5. 45. a.m. A. 28·680. T. 70°.

I missed the noon observation.

5. 45. p.m. at Hagar El Asal, the boundary between Khartoum and Barbar.

A. 28·625. T. 81°. Water 79°.

Oct. 19th.—On Nile. Calm weather.

5. 45. a.m. A. 28·660. T. 69°. Water 77°.

Noon; A. 28·635. T. 92°. Water 78°.

5. 45. p.m. A. 28·580. T. 89°. Water 79°.



Oct. 21st.—On Nile. Light northerly airs.

Noon ; above Gabel Karry.

A. 28·568. T. 94°. Water 80°.

5. 45. p.m. three miles above Gebel Sheikh El Tayeb.

A. 28·515. T. 89°. Water 81°.

Oct. 22d.—On Nile. Calm.

5. 45. a.m. at Sourorarb.

A. 28·612. T. 72°. Water 80°.

Noon ; A. 28·572. T. 92°. Water 82°.

5. 45. p.m. at Island of Halfay, near Khartoum

A. 28·532. T. 90°. Water 82°.

Oct. 23d.—On Nile. Calm weather.

5. 45. a.m. A. 28·605. T. 70°. W. 81°.

Noon ; at Khartoum. Ground floor of Roman Catholic

Mission. A. 28·580. T. 90°.

Oct. 24th.—At Khartoum.

5. 45. a.m. A. 28·610. T. 71°.

10 a.m. A. 28·660. T. 89°.

Noon ; A. 28·605. T. 90°.

Oct. 25th.—At Khartoum.

5. 45. a.m. A. 28·604. T. 80°.

Noon ; A. 28·573. T. 92°.

Oct. 26th.—At Khartoum. Fine north breezes.

5. 45. a.m. A. 28·597. T. 74°.

Noon ; A. 28·580. T. 88.

Oct. 27th.—At Khartoum. Light weather.

5. 45. a.m. A. 28·655. T. 82°.

1. p.m. A. 28·640. T. 90°.

Oct. 28th.—5. 45. a.m. A. 28·620. T. 70°.

Noon ; A. 28·620.

Oct. 29th.—March in the Desert.

Noon ; halting on large, sandy plain, thinly covered with grasses and sond bushes, and in a cool shed of mats, A. 28·51. T. 103°.

3. p.m. same place A. 28·525. T. 104°.

Oct. 30th.—March in the Desert.

5. a.m. A. 28·570. T. 66°.

Noon ; A. 28·580. T. 96°. (Shade of tree.)

Oct. 31st.—March in the Desert.

4. 45. a.m. A. 28·54. T. 74°.

Noon ; under shade of tree. A. 28·60. T. 103°.

3. p.m. same place. A. 28·50. T. 102°.

9. p.m. atmosphere disturbed. Heavy rain, clouds with vivid lightning, and whirlwinds of sand.

A. 28·625. T. 86°.

November 1st.—March in the Desert.

4. 45. a.m. A. 28·60. T. 74°.

Noon ; 28·60. T. 97°. at Abou Krat.

Nov. 2d.—March in the Desert.

4. a.m. A. 28·580. T. 84°.

Noon ; A. 28·570. T. 99°.

I think the Aneroid is so high in consequence of strong northerly winds.

Last night, the same as the previous, soon after sunset there was a violent tropical storm of wind, rain and lightning.

2. p.m. A. 28·505. T. 100°.

Afternoon march on camel, under umbrella, although there was a chilly north-east wind. T. 108°.

Nov. 3d.—March in the Desert. Strong north-east breezes.

Noon ; at Bir Halba. A. 28·480. T. 97°.

Nov. 4th.—March in the Desert. Strong north-east breezes.

3. a.m. A. 28·450. T. 74°.

Noon ; A. 28·34. T. 94°.

2. 30. p.m. A. 28·10. T. 100°.

Nov. 5th.—Desert. Strong north-east breezes.

5. 45. a.m. A. 28·29. T. 71°.

Noon ; A. 28·29. T. 95°.

2. 30. p.m. A. 28·23. T. 97°.

Nov. 6th.—March in the Desert. Strong north-east breezes.

5. 45. a.m. at Tandar. A. 28·275. T. 63°.

Noon ; at Walad El Zaky. A. 28·248. T. 93°.

2. p.m. same place. A. 28·180. T. 97°.

8. p.m. same place. A. 28·180. T. 74°.

Nov. 7th.—March in the Desert. Strong north-east breezes.

Noon ; A. 27·990. T. 98°.

2. 15. same place. A. 27·950. T. 96°.

Arrived at night at Labeyed.

Nov. 8th.—At Labeyed, the capital of Kordofan, in a cool room of thick mud walls.

Noon ; A. 27·860. T. 85°.

1. p.m. A. 27·830.

2. p.m. A. 27·800.

3. p.m. A. 27·780.

4. p.m. A. 27·772.

8. p.m. A. 27·834.

Nov. 9th.—Labeyed. Kordofan.

6. a.m. A. 27·905°. T. 82°.

8. a.m. A. 27·925°.

10. a.m. A. 27·921. T. 86°.

Noon ; A. 27·895. T. 89.

1. p.m. A. 27·850.

2. p.m. A. 27·830.

7. p.m. A. 27·880.

Nov. 10th.—Labeyed. Kordofan.

6. a.m. A. 27·912. T. 78°.

9. 30. a.m. A. 27·940. T. 86°.

Noon ; 27·880. T. 88°.

3. 30. p.m. A. 27·835. T. 91°.

6. p.m. A. 27·830. T. 88.



The Governor told me that the highest he has ever seen the thermometer in his room, and of course it is the coolest place, was 102° ; and I believe his remark is true, that though the sun is hotter here than in Egypt, the houses inside are cooler.

Nov. 11th.—Labeyed. Kordofan.

5. 45. a.m. A. 27.93 . T. 73° .

I was too ill to take any more.

THE END.

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